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Cooperation between the United Nations and the Economic Cooperation Organization

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

United Nations reform: measures and proposals: The Millennium Assembly of the United Nations

Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: integration of the economies in transition into the world economy

Globalization and interdependence

Human rights questions

Letter dated 18 August 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Turkmenistan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon the instruction of my Government, I have the honour to kindly request Your Excellency to circulate the attached as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 28, 39, 61 (b), 96 (b), 102 and 116 of the provisional agenda.

(*Signed*) Aksoltan **Ataeva**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

[Original: Russian]

Saparmurat Niyazov, President of Turkmenistan

The Turkmens, Turkmenistan and the world: millennia and the twenty-first century, the bond of time and civilizations

For the opening of the United Nations Millennium Assembly

Today, all of the world's peoples and the individual and collective intellect of nations are engaged in the creative task of seeking a path to development and finding their place in the global history of the new era.

No one can be exempt from this process, for the past offers no guarantees for the future; it only serves as a starting point for the way forward, the effectiveness of which will depend on the capacity to respond appropriately to contemporary challenges and changes. This is perhaps the defining characteristic of the new century.

Time in the modern world is only a fleeting moment between the ageless past and the future, but it is decisive and all-powerful if managed with wisdom and care; it forms the historical memory of a nation and guarantees the future. In his report to this September's Millennium Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations draws attention to a series of problems that require immediate solutions and which relate to various areas of the life of the community of nations: politics, economics, science, culture, health and social infrastructure. As a neutral State, Turkmenistan continues to cooperate closely and actively with the United Nations on the most urgent items on the international agenda.

Turkmenistan has taken the first, and therefore the most difficult, steps towards its rebirth by rebuilding its own sovereign history and statehood. These are ancient and eventful, but today we regard them as a thing of the past and are forging ahead with a clean slate. For this reason, we are unburdened by past injuries and the weight of ideologies and phobias, political clichés and national stereotypes.

The ideology of independent Turkmenistan is based on our religion and Almighty Allah, and on faith in ourselves ... in humanity and its capacity to direct the course of history and in the triumph of the instincts of creation and peace. This has shaped both the philosophy of our domestic development and our approach to major international problems and trends.

Among these, the most prominent today is undoubtedly globalization. As a defining trend in world development at the threshold of the new millennium, it has taken on, simultaneously, all the complexity of modern global geostrategies and international economic realities, and has called into question what have appeared thus far to be the unshakeable foundations of international law and the moral and legal aspects of the relations between countries, groups of countries, whole regions and even continents.

Our view is far from an oversimplified, black-and-white assessment of globalization, which is an inescapable and objective process that was predetermined

by the course of all the global political, economic, scientific and technological developments of the second half of the twentieth century and which has significant potential benefits. However, we must not ignore the aspects of globalization that have raised justifiable concerns on the part of those who do not suffer from the fatal belief that there is no alternative to a single political philosophy that is allegedly superior to all others, and that humanity can be "programmed" to fit a uniform standard. We have particular grounds for certainty in this regard, in view of the experience of the former Soviet Union, which sought to maintain the imperial model of statehood at the cost of perpetuating stereotypes without taking account of specific national features and circumstances. This is a very serious issue, for such an approach calls into question the entire system of international relations, the legitimacy of the established norms, principles and aims of international law and the very viability of the United Nations itself as a vehicle for voluntary cooperation among nations as equal.

The model of political globalization based on the supremacy of a single philosophy, in this case a neo-liberal one, gradually tends to strengthen the logic of confrontational thinking in the global arena and to twist the arms of those who do not recognize the new international power structure based on "humanitarian intervention" and the protection of "human rights", but not the rights of peoples. Turkmenistan, along with the overwhelming majority of States of the world, opposes such an approach. We are convinced that the common progress of humanity is determined not by the dictates of a single model or the standardization of the rules and principles of life, but by the coexistence of different ideas and philosophies.

During the recent visit to Turkmenistan by the President of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Jiang Zemin, this idea ran through the discussions on prospects for global development. At this point, it would be fitting to quote, in full, paragraph 10 of the Turkmen-Chinese Joint Declaration.

> "The parties consider that all countries have the right to determine their own political and economic system and social order and to choose means of safeguarding and protecting human rights in accordance with the realities of their countries. No State has the right to interfere in the internal affairs of other sovereign States on any pretext whatsoever, including that of the 'pre-eminence of human rights over sovereignty' and the use of 'humanitarian intervention' to undermine the sovereignty and independence of States."

This paragraph is not merely a statement of the position of two States which, by the way, are very different in terms of population, economic potential and history. It is a reflection of the deeply held aspirations of many peoples that have remained on the sidelines of world history and which associate their return to the mainstream with ideas such as their right to determine their own future and to proclaim their national dignity.

Turkmenistan joins its voice to the declarations issued by international organizations such as the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Economic Cooperation Organization, the Group of 77 and others, which values the world in all its diversity. We believe that international law and the Charter of the United Nations, including its principles of respect for each country's sovereignty and right to choose its own path to development, and non-interference in the internal affairs of States, should continue to form the basis for the world order and be the alpha and omega of relations between States. We

share the general view that, in the twenty-first century, the United Nations system is in need of rational reforms. The Millennium Assembly could afford a unique opportunity to identify problems that may arise in the future and to search for ways of consolidating and strengthening this unique institution. On the eve of the Millennium Summit, active discussions are under way on the need to reform the United Nations and the Security Council, to balance the right to veto, and so forth. Turkmenistan believes that the main requirement for this exercise is not to do harm or be carried away by emotions; instead, a well-considered and balanced approach is needed in any decision on the future of the Organization. We are convinced that, in view of the interruptions and incongruencies observed in the work of this mechanism, we should not rush to replace it completely but should endeavour to diagnose correctly the resources that remain. It may turn out that the problem lies not with the system but with those who represent it at various levels. We are in favour of United Nations reform, but only in reform that strengthens and broadens its role in the world; we are against its dissolution in any new supranational structures and the erosion and appropriation of United Nations functions by individual States or groups of countries or by other organizations. This is fully relevant to the serious problem of Afghanistan, to which, for historical and geographical reasons, Turkmenistan is particularly sensitive. The history of the suffering Afghan people clearly supports our conviction that any outside interference in Afghanistan's internal conflict forcefully divides the Afghan people into "bad Afghans" and "good Afghans", and the punishment of the former only leads to new outbreaks of bloodshed and the suffering of innocent people. We insist that peace, stability and development in Afghanistan can be achieved only by its own people, who are now willing to reach a voluntary intra-national agreement. Goodwill is now needed from those outside Afghanistan who are in a position to wield influence. The United Nations can rest assured that its Special Mission to Afghanistan will find Turkmenistan to be a reliable partner prepared to cooperate actively in settling the Afghan question. Our approach to the solution of this problem is based on our general strategy for developing relations with neighbouring countries. The Turkmen people have inherited the values of an ancient civilization, being direct descendants of the Oguz and the Seljuks, who existed as a State and people for hundreds of years in Central, South and Western Asia and the Near and Middle East. This experience, which formed our people's character and psychological make-up, now guides Turkmenistan in its choice of foreign-policy strategies and tactical actions, at the basis of which are the time-tested principle of good neighbourliness and mutually advantageous partnership with the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Turkmenistan's current relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran could perhaps serve as the most significant example of this. How short-sighted were those who tried for decades to cause a rift between our peoples, whose ancient roots were nourished from one spiritual and cultural source. The peoples of our States are united by a common past, illuminated by the names of outstanding personalities of the East. We have always prayed to one God, but in the holy sources of Islam each of us honours those precepts that for centuries have shaped our peoples' special practices and characteristic behaviour, and which are their spiritual and moral support. Today, when history has once again brought us together, it has become evident that people must be neither artificially united nor artificially separated, they must not be made to resemble one another nor be turned into opposites.

The example of our relations highlights a great truth: just as no two individuals are alike, no two peoples are alike. The more we acknowledge our kinship and what we have in common, the more important it is to respect what makes us different. Only in such unity lies genuine brotherhood and mutual understanding.

From the point of view of ensuring sustainable social development, progress and well-being of peoples, regional cooperation takes on special urgency. Today in our region of Asia a stable system of active cooperation is taking shape, as represented by the Economic Cooperation Organization, which is also a partner of the United Nations, the Association of South-East Asian Nations and other inter-governmental structures. The Economic Cooperation Organization is 10 States with a population of over 300 million people, with major resources and economic potential. In the short time since its existence in its current composition, the Economic Cooperation Organization has begun to implement large-scale interregional transport and communications projects intended to bring the economies of European and Asian countries closer, bridge the technological gap between them and establish an equitable system of trade and economic relations between North and South.

Turkmenistan's efforts to bring its sources of energy to international markets objectively serve this goal. The building of transregional and transcontinental pipelines is an imperative of the times, the true and most effective means of overcoming the deepening energy crisis. Disparities in the distribution and consumption of resources produces a fatalistic sense of doom among entire peoples and brings with it the danger of social upheavals in States that do not get their fair share, undermining the foundations of security at the national and regional levels. A pipeline means new jobs; it means light and heat in homes.

I am convinced that the contours of European and Asian security along the North-South and East-West axes are those of a future belt of stable, steadily developing States lying along the routes of the oil pipelines. In this sense, the construction of pipelines is not simply a profitable commercial venture. It is a social development project on a colossal scale, transcending national borders and bringing with it the strongest psychological and moral benefits.

In this regard, Turkmenistan supports the initiative on security guarantees and the unimpeded transit of energy through main inter-State pipelines. Preliminary discussions have already taken place among Government leaders and with the Secretary-General of the United Nations. We favour the establishment of an international legal mechanism to safeguard the interests of suppliers, transit countries and consumers. The use of pipelines as an instrument of political pressure and economic diktat must be categorically rejected. The process of globalization of international economic relations requires the elaboration of an international convention on a regime and guarantees for the operation of inter-State pipelines. Turkmenistan sees this as one of the most important challenges of the current century and is the sponsor of this United Nations document.

There is one more topic that arouses the interest and attention of the United Nations. The changes in the geopolitical situation have brought about a new alignment of interests in the Caspian region and the need to elaborate a new approach to defining the status of the Caspian Sea. The present uncertainty of this question and unilateral attempts to force acceptance of a particular scenario are hampering littoral States' rational use of the enormous potential of that body of

water. Most States bordering the Caspian Sea today support the sectoral option to divide the Caspian. Turkmenistan can also accept this principle, just as it accepted the earlier concept of a "common sea". In any event, the most important thing for us is that full account be taken of the interests of all littoral States and that cooperation in the Caspian should be based on mutual respect, equal rights and mutual advantage. The Caspian Sea should be a sea of harmony, and its riches should be the property of all littoral States, each of which has the right to its corresponding national part of the sea. Turkmenistan believes that the search for a new legal status for the Caspian Sea requires all littoral States to show that they are willing to make reasonable compromises and that they are ready to take a sober view of the new realities. Monitoring should be carried out by the United Nations. Today the process of forming a new international legal regime for the Caspian has come up against certain difficulties, which can have highly undesirable effects on regional stability. In these conditions, the active involvement of the United Nations becomes even more pressing.

One of the key tasks of the modern world is to develop relations based on equality of rights, partnership and equity among States at different levels of socio-economic, technological and industrial development. It is not the fault of peoples that the weight of problems that have accumulated over decades, if not centuries, has come crashing down on them today, causing disillusionment and pessimism and leading entire nations and continents to have an inadequate, at times irrational, perception of their own fate. Never before has the gap in the levels of consumption and distribution of resources between poor and rich countries been so great, never before has the threat to the entire system of global stability and security that this poses been so manifest. The primary causes of most of the military conflicts and ethnic strife that break out periodically in various parts of the world are of a socio-economic nature. To raise them to the level of a global confrontation of cultures, religions and civilizations or to cultivate the logic of the crusades on modern soil is simply misleading. The root of the evil lies not in the fatal incompatibility of the ideologies and values of East and West or in contradictions among religion, but in the fact that the system of international economic relations in its current form does not correspond to the more political realities and needs of the world's population. We support the efforts of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other agencies to create an essentially new, non-discriminatory model of relations among States large and small, industrial and agrarian, and to develop broad interregional cooperation. Without, of course, making this conditional upon political concessions or encroachments on sovereignty.

The elite club, if there are those who still put their trust in its omnipotence, must realize that admission to it cannot be bought at the cost of one's own dignity. And this is also one of the characteristics of the twenty-first century.

Turkmenistan, which champions respect, tolerance and humanity in international relations, adheres to similar principles in its national life. The establishment in the State and society of the ideals of inter-ethnic and inter-religious harmony, tolerance, social partnership and equity is a priority of our domestic policy. Immediately after gaining independence, Turkmenistan declared that the State's highest priority was the human person and his or her life, health, security and full moral and physical development. Turkmenistan announced and began to implement a policy of making the social protection of the population an

unconditional priority and securing it against poverty and indigence; this facilitated the maintenance of socio-political stability and trust in the direction of the reforms. As a result of the measures implemented, infant mortality has declined, life expectancy has increased and crime has fallen in Turkmenistan since its independence. Turkmenistan has put in place strong guarantees for the protection of maternity and childhood and the defence of the rights of young people, women and the elderly.

In this area, cooperation with such specialized international agencies as the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the International Public Health Association (United States of America) and the international organization Médecins sans frontières is becoming increasingly more important. A set of measures has been developed with the assistance of WHO, UNDP and the Turkish International Cooperation Agency to facilitate the implementation of the State Saglyk ("Health") programme. The programme is currently being implemented in phases.

The further development of the Turkmen State's socially oriented policy is reflected in the "Strategy for socio-economic reform in Turkmenistan to the year 2010", which provides for the continuation of the policy of prioritizing social programmes, taking into account the economic conditions prevailing in the years since independence. Today, Turkmenistan has joined the ranks of countries self-sufficient in the production of cereals and basic foodstuffs, having implemented the basic elements of its comprehensive economic security programme. We are pleased that the actions and achievements of the Turkmen people have been highly commended by the United Nations, and our plans and programmes always reflect the general strategy of that important international Organization.

The economic programme provides for accelerated development of the real sector of the economy, institutional reform and attraction of investment, including foreign investment. Special emphasis will be placed on developing branches of agriculture; the fuel and energy, chemical and consumer complexes; transport and communication infrastructure; and the network of transnational pipelines that bringing Turkmen fuel to world markets. Branches new to the country will appear: ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, the cellulose and paper industry, alcohol distillation and others. In order to solve these tasks, Turkmenistan has sufficient mineral, raw-material and labour resources and qualified specialists and workers. by the end of 2010, labour resources will increase 1.7 times, comprising 4.5 million persons. With the projected rates of economic development and the measures planned for the period in question, it is anticipated that over 1.5 million new jobs will be created in the country, which will ensure almost full employment, with unemployment in 2010 not exceeding 2 per cent of labour resources.

Turkmenistan's reform strategy for this period provides for the maintenance of average annual economic growth rates of at least 18 per cent through maximum use of all spheres of the economy. Development of production capacity remains one of the main strategic tasks for the projected period. The leading role will continue to be assigned to the fuel and energy complex. Efforts will focus on labour-intensive branches offering good prospects in terms of opportunities and competitiveness:

agriculture, light industry, the food industry, tourism, housing construction and infrastructure-building.

Increasing yields of strategically important types of output, namely cotton and wheat, remains a key task of all the reforms planned in agriculture for this period. During the projected period, it is estimated that 2.5 million tons of raw cotton and 2.2 million tons of wheat will be harvested in 2005. Already in 2000, the yield of domestic Turkmen cereals was 1.75 million tons. By way of comparison: in the first year after independence, 70,000 tons of cereals were harvested in Turkmenistan. Such is the progress of independent Turkmenistan, such is our contribution to solving the global task of providing the planet's population with the food and products of importance for human life.

The strategy for the development of the national economy provides for the substantial expansion of existing capacity, and this, in turn, presupposes the attraction of sizeable investment. By 2010, the total level of investment from all sources of finance should increase 2.7 times as compared to 2000.

Economic growth alone cannot guarantee the well-being of our citizens; it merely creates the necessary conditions and prerequisites for this. For this reason, close attention is being paid to urgent and long-term efforts to address social issues.

A strategic goal of Turkmenistan's social policy for the period to 2010 is the maintenance of high indicators with respect to the population's living standard. Significant budgetary resources will continue to be directed towards the social sphere and its development. In the light of the growth of the population, there are plans to construct new public and consumer facilities and to make more effective use of existing infrastructure. Gas, water, electricity and salt will continue to be supplied to the population free of charge, while there will be targeted assistance to the most vulnerable segments of the population.

In the course of the reforms, the non-State sector of the economy will be further developed. The number of enterprises in that sector will increase significantly. These changes are the result of the development of private and mixed forms of ownership, the acceleration of the privatization process and the improvement of the organizational and legal forms of business enterprises (peasants' associations and consumer cooperatives). The programme includes plans to privatize around 3,000 State enterprises and facilities by the end of the projected period.

Our goal is to make Turkmenistan a prosperous country and make it a secure home for every person. The tasks of steadily improving the people's well-being and guaranteeing their rights form the basis of all State programmes of independent Turkmenistan.

In December 1999, the country's highest legislative organ, the People's Council, adopted a decision and approved the Act on the total and final abolition of the death penalty in Turkmenistan, the first humanist document ever adopted on the Asian continent. In order to further humanize public life in Turkmenistan an act on an annual amnesty was also adopted. The amnesty is declared on the eve of Gadyr gidzhes", the Night of All-Forgiveness. The act gives people a chance to return to the path of righteousness and to live and work according to their consciences.

Turkmenistan has acceded to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, confirming our intention to implement in theory and in practice the principles of humanism, democracy and protection of human rights and freedoms. We take special pride in the fact that Turkmenistan was the first of the newly independent States to decide on such steps. With regard to these matters, however, being realists and pragmatists, we understand that social development is a constant process, which requires cooperation, the exchange of views, and dialogue with the United Nations, first and foremost.

The interrelatedness and interdependence of the processes occurring in the world today are clear. Their dialectics proceed along the following axis: the citizen — the State — the region — the continent — the whole world — humanity. We therefore believe that any State, any nation, large or small, that is fully aware of its responsibility in this sequence is able to have a real impact on the entire process of global development. Commitment to such an approach dictates the positions and actions of Turkmenistan with respect to the most important and topical problems of world development, leading it to coordinate global tasks with its national interests. Only through united efforts will the international community of nations be able to deal with these tasks, by setting in motion modern political technologies. There must be no place among these for economic or political blackmail or diktat, and no assistance — whether from international organizations, individual countries or financial centres — can be based on encroachments on the sovereign rights of States. *The law of force must yield to the force of law. This is another characteristic of the new era.* Turkmenistan always has insisted and insists on such an approach, an approach that reflects the moral criteria of the Turkmen people and its political philosophy, which was the starting point of the movement for State neutrality.

This year, Turkmenistan will mark an important date in its independent history: the fifth anniversary of the recognition by the United Nations of its status as a permanently neutral State. These years have clearly demonstrated — and this is highly valued within the United Nations — that Turkmenistan is an effective partner in regional and international projects and chooses its foreign-policy priorities independently. Turkmenistan, which is sincerely grateful to the international community for its support, will continue to demonstrate in practice that neutrality, peaceableness, and good-neighbourliness were and will remain at the heart of the foreign policy of Turkmenistan, which does not view its fate as separate from the common fate of humanity.

On 27 December 1999, the People's Council of Turkmenistan adopted the Declaration on the foreign policy of Turkmenistan in the twenty-first century based on permanent neutrality and the principles of peaceableness, good-neighbourliness and democracy. This historic document reiterated the steadfastness of the foreign policy of neutral Turkmenistan as a State that is implementing in theory and in practice the principles of humanism, democracy and protection of human rights and freedoms.

Turkmenistan recognizes and respects the human rights and freedoms recognized by the international community and set down in the norms of international law. The Declaration again stressed the primordial importance in the long term of Turkmenistan's cooperation with the United Nations in this area. Turkmenistan's active participation in the process of multilateral cooperation in the human rights field with international organizations and, first and foremost, the

United Nations, is demonstrated by our State's membership of over 40 international organizations. Moreover, more than half of those organizations are involved in the safeguarding and protection of human rights and freedoms.

At present, more than 70 international human rights instruments have been adopted by the United Nations. Turkmenistan has acceded to over 30 international human rights agreements, including the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and the 1977 Protocols Additional thereto; the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966; the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

All of this clearly demonstrates that the human dimension is the main determinant of the nature of the internal reform of Turkmen society and its foreign policy, and it is precisely the focus on values common to all humanity and the highest ideals of humanism and justice that form the basis of the policy of neutral Turkmenistan. The fifth anniversary of the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of a resolution on the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan will take place on 12 December 2000. This date will mark a new beginning for our foreign policy for the new century.

The Turkmen national mentality is in essence common to all humanity. For many centuries, Turkmenistan was the crossroads of the routes from East to West and South to North; it played an important role as the central section of the great silk route from China to Europe, which for almost one and a half millennia was a path of peace and dialogue among the cultures of various peoples. All this facilitated the development in the land of the Turkmens of a special spiritual atmosphere, an intellectual potential, which was the driving force of the cultural progress characteristic of all the civilizations of ancient Turkmenistan. This is the source of the Turkmens' characteristic openness, peaceableness and respect for the cultures and religions of other peoples. Neutrality is the natural and logical development of the whole internal, spiritual life of the nation and of the foreign policy of the young State, a policy that combines an understanding of Turkmenistan's place in the international political arena with the historical traditions of the relations between Turkmens and the outside world. We are all contemporaries in the twenty-first century. The great complexity of the tasks facing the States Members of the United Nations is obvious. The magnitude of the challenges confronting the Organization itself is in proportion to the hopes nurtured by people all over the world, who expect that, with the advent of a new era, there will be real change for the better in their lives. This is true of States large and small, rich and poor, new and long-established. We are faced with tasks whose solution can be achieved through collective effort but which also requires the recognition of individual responsibility. Such is the logic underlying the political conduct of Turkmenistan, a logic acquired by my people through much suffering in the past and in the present, a logic that has determined the path of its development in the new century and the new millennium. And, of course, Turkmenistan will respond to the appeal by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the world's peoples to unite their efforts in order to make the twenty-first century more secure and more just than the twentieth. This century will be a golden age in the history of the Turkmen people.